

● Christians almost unanimously keep the first day in distinction from *the Jews* who comprise nearly all those who keep the seventh day. Hence “Jewish Sabbath” is natural and proper again.

● The few Christians who keep a different day from the great body of the church keep the Sabbath which *the Jews* keep. Hence, again, it is accurate and proper to designate them as those who keep “the Jewish Sabbath.”

● But seventh-day Sabbath keepers say that the seventh day is called “the Sabbath of the Lord thy God” (*Exo 20:10*), and “my holy day” (*Isaiah 58:13*), therefore it is not proper to call it “the Jewish Sabbath.” **ANSWER:** Every holy season, place, person, or article was called “the Lord’s,” as “the Lord’s passover” (*Exo 12:11*). Yet we read, “The passover, a **feast of the Jews**” (*John 6:4*). It is designated “the Lord’s” in one place and “the Jews” in another. Even so with the Sabbath. It is “the Sabbath of the Lord” in one place and “her Sabbaths” in another (*Hosea 2:11*). Hence it is correct and scriptural to call the seventh day “**the Jewish Sabbath.**”

## QUESTIONS FOR SABBATH KEEPERS

**1.** Why is there *no command* in the New Testament (**NT**) for Christians to keep the Sabbath holy? Why is the *Fourth* Commandment *never* quoted in the **NT**, but the other nine commands of the Ten Commandments are there repeatedly?

● **1st**—To worship the Lord God only: no less than **50** times (*Matt 4:10; Luke 4:8; John 4:23,24; Rom 1:25; Phil 3:3; Rev 4:10; 5:14; 22:8,9; etc.*)

● **2nd**—Idolatry: condemned **20** times (*Rom 1:25; 1 Cor 6:9; 10:7,14; 12:2; 2 Cor 6:16; 1 Thess 1:9; Gal 5:20; Eph 5:5; Col 3:5; 1 Pet 4:3; 1 John 5:21; etc.*)

● **3rd**—Profanity: condemned **4** times (*Matt 12:36; Rom 2:24; Eph 5:4; Rev 16:9*)

● **5th**—Honoring parents: is taught **6** times (*Matt 15:3-6; 19:19; Mark 7:9-13; 10:19; Luke 18:20; Eph 6:2*)

● **6th**—Murder: condemned **7** times (*Matt 5:21,22; 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Rom 1:29; 13:9; James 2:11*)

● **7th**—Adultery: condemned **12** times (*Matt 5:27,28,32; 19:9,18; Mark 10:11,12,19; Luke 16:18; 18:20; Rom 13:9; James 2:11; 2 Pet 2:14*)

● **8th**—Theft: condemned **6** times (*Matt 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Rom 2:21; 13:9; Eph 4:28*)

● **9th**—False witness: condemned **5** times (*Matt 15:9; 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; 1 Cor 15:13-15*)

● **10th**—Covetousness: condemned **9** times (*Mark 7:22; Luke 12:15; Rom 1:29; 7:7; 13:9; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5; Heb 13:5; 2 Pet 2:14*)

Time an again all through the **NT** long lists of sins embracing every possible shade of wickedness are given, but a disregard of the seventh day is *never once* included—13 sins (*Mark 7:21,22*), 19 sins (*Rom 1:29-31*), 17 sins (*Gal 5:19-21*), 18 sins (*2 Tim 3:1-4*), etc. How is this? Would Seventh-day Adventists (**SDA**) have left it so? Strange to say, the duty to keep the seventh day is not once mentioned in the whole **NT**! There is not one single command

from either Christ or his apostles to keep that day. It is not once said that it is wrong to work on the seventh day, or that God will bless any one for observing it. There is no promise for keeping it, no threatening for not keeping it. If disregarding the seventh day is so great a crime as the **SDA** claim, it is unaccountable that no warning against it should be given in all the **NT**, not even once! Is all this silence merely accidental? **SDA** have to believe that. But the supposition is absurd. The Sabbath command was left out **on purpose**, the same as Pentecost, passover, new moons, sacrifices, and the like.

Paul, in all his 14 epistles, never even names the Sabbath but once, and that only to show that it was abolished, nailed to the cross (*Col 2:14-16*). Contrast this with **SDA** literature! They usually answer that the Jews were already keeping the Sabbath, and therefore the Jewish Christians needed no instruction on this point. But this answer is unacceptable. The Jews were just as strictly opposed to false gods and images, and yet time and again Christians are warned against these things—“Neither be ye idolaters... Flee from idolatry” (*1 Cor 10:7,14*). But where does it say, “**Keep the seventh day,**” or “**Flee from Sabbath breaking**”? *Nowhere!* Besides, the great body of the Christian converts in the latter years of the gospel were Gentiles, who had never kept the seventh day at all. Why should they not be instructed on how to keep it? Why should they be repeatedly warned against all other evil practices of their former lives, but never once warned against breaking the Sabbath as they certainly had done? This unalterable truth, that the Sabbath command is *completely absent* from the entire **NT**, has never ceased to haunt Seventh-day Adventists!

**2.** How could the Sabbath be a “**sign**” between *God* and *Israel*, if *all nations* were expected to keep it? Think about that. A **sign** is something that is distinct and unique. God said to Abraham: “This is my covenant... you are to undergo *circumcision*; it will be a **sign** of the covenant between me and you” (*Gen 17:10,11 NIV*). How ridiculous would it have been for God to say this to Abraham if *all nations* were already commanded by God to undergo circumcision! That would not have been a **sign** at all! That would not have distinguished Abraham at all! Yet this is what **SDA** want us to believe about the Sabbath! that **God instituted the Sabbath at Creation for all people!** that **all nations** were already commanded by their Creator to keep it!—when God specifically said *to the children of Israel:*

Verily my *sabbaths* ye shall keep: for it is a **sign** between *me* and *you* throughout your generations... *the children of Israel* shall keep *the sabbath*, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a **sign** between *me* and *the children of Israel* (*Exo 31:13-17*).

**Excuse me!** What kind of a “**sign**” *for Israel* would that have been if the Sabbath command was already given *to everyone*? The nature of a *sign* is that it specifically distinguishes those who receive it. It’s like a brand, an identifying mark. The Lord gave Abraham an identifying mark—*circumcision*! And he gave the children of Israel an identifying mark—*the Sabbath!*

**The Abrahamic covenant** had its special and unique sign—*circumcision*. **The Mosaic covenant** had its special and unique sign—*the Sabbath*. God made a separate covenant with Moses just as he made a separate covenant with Abraham. The Sabbath was **the ceremonial sign** of the covenant that was written on the tables of stone (*Exo 31:16-18*), just as circumcision was **the ceremonial sign** of the covenant God made with Abraham—“the sign of circumcision” (*Rom 4:11*). The other nations were not involved with either of these things!

**3.** Why is **the Sabbath** the *only one* of the Ten Commandments that is said to be “**throughout your generations,**” the distinct phrase that indicates that it was a temporary *ceremonial* law only for the Jews? The following are all the places where this phrase is found in the Bible. Notice how the Lord links all these things together with this unique phrase:

● **The Lord’s passover:** “Ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations” (*Exo 12:14*)

● **The burnt offering:** “This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations” (*Exo 29:42*)

● **The altar of incense:** “He shall burn... a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations” (*Exo 30:8*)

● **Making an atonement:** “Once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations” (*Exo 30:10*)

● **The holy anointing oil:** “This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations” (*Exo 30:31*)

● **Of priests and drinking:** “Do not drink wine nor strong drink... when ye go into the tabernacle... lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations” (*Lev 10:9*)

● **The wave offering, burnt offering, meat offering, drink offering, sin offering, and peace offering:** “It shall be a statute for ever... throughout your generations” (*Lev 23:14,21*)

● **Day of atonement:** “It shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations” (*Lev 23:31*)

● **Blowing of trumpets:** “And they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations” (*Num 10:8*)

● **The Levites had no inheritance in the land:** “It shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations” (*Num 18:23*)

● **The cities of refuge:** “These things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations” (*Num 35:29*)

● **The Sabbath:** “My sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations” (*Exo 31:13*)

Every one of these was Jewish, temporary, ceremonial, and instituted under *the Old Covenant*. And every one of these was to pass away with the coming of Christ and *the New Covenant*. Thus the Lord ties them all together with this very distinct phrase: “**throughout your generations.**” **SDA** teach that the seventh-day Sabbath is *for ever*. It is true that the Bible links the words “for ever” with the Sabbath (*see Exo 31:17*). But the words *for ever* are also used with 12 other of the things listed above that have *passed away!* Words like *for ever* and *perpetual*

were attached to many things under *the Old Covenant* that are gone! They were perpetual in that they were to last *as long as that covenant lasted!* That covenant **ended** with the coming of Christ and the inauguration of *the New Covenant* (*Heb 8:6-13*). The Sabbath as “the sign” of the Mosaic Covenant: **(1)** can only be meant for Israel with whom that covenant was made, and **(2)** ceased when that covenant came to an end. That’s why there is no command anywhere in the **New Testament** for “*New Covenant believers*” to keep the Sabbath day! It was Jewish, ceremonial, and only for a time.

**4.** If the Sabbath is a “*moral*” command, as Adventists teach, like stealing and adultery, how could it be violated *without punishment*? Jesus shows us that the Sabbath was *ceremonial* right here: “Have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple **profane** the sabbath, and are **blameless?**” (*Matt 12:5*). Could any of the other Ten Commandments be transgressed *without sin* being committed? This shows conclusively that the Sabbath is different from the other nine. The priests worked on every Sabbath and did so *without sinning*. Clearly, the Sabbath was *ceremonial*.

When Jesus said, “The sabbath was **made** for man” (*Mark 2:27*), he sets the Fourth Commandment apart from all the rest. It was “**made,**” the rest were not. The seventh day had no holiness *in itself*. It had to be “**made**” holy. Just like so many other things that were *made holy* by God’s appointment: “the holy temple,” “the holy hill,” “the holy ark,” “the holy altar,” “the holy Sabbath,” etc. **But moral duties are not “made!”** They exist in the very nature of things. For instance, it is morally wrong to murder. It would have been wrong even if God had given no command against it. But not so with *the Sabbath!* It never would have been wrong for the Jews to “work” on the seventh day unless God had given a specific command against it. This shows it to be what it is: *ceremonial*.

**5.** Why do Adventists blind their eyes to the obvious truth that Paul in **Col 2:16** is following the **OT** pattern of referring to the Jewish holy days in a **yearly, monthly, weekly** sequence? “Let no man therefore judge you... in respect of a feast day [**yearly**] or a new moon [**monthly**] or a sabbath day [**weekly**]” **Col 2:16 (ASV)**. Notice the striking parallel between Paul in **Col 2:16** and these **OT** passages: “Offerings in the feasts [**yearly**], and in the new moons [**monthly**], and in the sabbaths [**weekly**]” (*Ezek 45:17*). “I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days [**yearly**], her new moons [**monthly**], and her sabbaths [**weekly**]” (*Hosea 2:11*). **Col 2:16** is right in line with these texts! Paul not only lists the exact *same days* of Ezekiel and Hosea, but he lists them in the exact *same order!*—**yearly** feast days, **monthly** new moons, **weekly** Sabbath days.

Paul also clearly connects **Col 2:16** with **Gal 4:9,10**—But now that you know God...how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special **days** and **months** and **seasons** and **years!** (*NIV*) Paul here flatly states, “You are observing...”

## Questions that Silence “Jewish Sabbath” Keepers

Hard questions for Sabbath keepers are coming, but first, a few comments about the word “Jewish.” It is perfectly proper to refer to the seventh day as “**the Jewish Sabbath.**” I know this term “Jewish Sabbath” offends seventh-day Sabbath keepers. They strongly object by saying, Where does the Bible call it “the Jewish Sabbath”? It’s “the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.” Well, that sounds real good, and a lot of folks are persuaded by it. But the following points, supported both by Scripture and common sense, show that it is indeed proper to designate the seventh day as “**the Jewish Sabbath.**”

- “Sabbath” is purely a *Hebrew* word never found till the time of Moses and *the Jews* (*Exo 16:23*).
- The word Sabbath is never used in the Bible except in connection with some *Jewish* holy time.
- There is no record that the Sabbath was ever kept till *the Jews* kept it (*Exo 16*).
- The Sabbath was given *to the Jews alone*—“Remember that *thou* wast a servant in the land of Egypt...therefore the Lord thy God commanded *thee* to keep the sabbath day” (*Deut 5:15*). “*The children of Israel* shall keep the sabbath...It is a sign between me and the children of Israel” (*Exo 31:16,17*). The record is clear that God gave the Sabbath *to the Jews*, but to no others. “Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai...and *madest known unto them* thy holy sabbath” (*Neh 9:13,14*). “I gave *them* my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and *them*” (*Ezek 20:12*). “The Lord hath given *you* the sabbath” (*Exo 16:29*). If God “made it known” unto *them*, and “gave it” to *them*, was it not *their* Sabbath? Is it not *the Jewish* Sabbath? I give Fred a knife. Is it not *Fred’s* knife?
- God himself calls the Sabbath “*her* sabbaths” (*Hosea 2:11*). “I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and *her sabbaths*, and all her solemn feasts.” Isn’t it then *the Jewish* Sabbath?
- The Sabbath was never given to any other nation.
- “The children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations” (*Exo 31:16*). To whom was it confined? To the generation of *the Jews*.
- “It is a sign between me and *the children of Israel*” (*Exo 31:17*). It was theirs exclusively, *Jewish*.
- The Sabbath is classed right in with the other *Jewish* holy days and sacrifices. See Leviticus 23:1-44; Numbers 28:25; 1 Chronicles 23:29-31; 2 Chronicles 2:4; 8:13, etc.
- The Sabbath was abolished with them (*Col 2:14-17*).
- *The Jews* comprise nearly all those who keep the seventh day; hence “Jewish Sabbath” is a natural and intelligent designation for that day.

- **days**—*weekly Sabbaths*, corresponding to ‘Sabbath day’ (*Col 2*)
- **months**—*new moons*, corresponding to ‘a new moon’ (*Col 2*)
- **seasons**—*the 7 feasts*, corresponding to ‘a feast day’ (*Col 2*)
- **and years**—the sabbatical year and the 50th year of Jubilee

Without any doubt, Paul is speaking about the observances of **all** Jewish holy days, including *the weekly Sabbath*. They have **all** been “blotted out” and “nailed to the cross” **Col 2:14**. **Question:** If **Isaiah 66:23** proves that the Sabbath will be in heaven, will the *new moon festival* also be there?—“**from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another**”

We need to see also what immediately follows **Col 2:16**—“These are a **shadow** of the things that were to come; the *reality*, however, is found *in Christ*” **v17 (NIV)**. The Sabbath was a **shadow** that was fulfilled in Christ—the reality! When a type and shadow is fulfilled in a person, you no longer focus on the shadow. Lambs were slaughtered under the Old Covenant; but when Jesus, the fulfillment, came and offered himself, the sacrificing of animals *ceased*. The same truth applies to the Sabbath! The keeping of a Sabbath day is *over and done with* since Christ has come. Jesus is the *reality* of “rest” for the believer!—the embodiment of *real* rest of soul that’s so often spoken of in the Scriptures: **in Isaiah**, “This is the *rest* wherewith ye may cause the weary to *rest*” (*28:12*); “His *rest* shall be glorious” (*11:10*); and **in Jeremiah**, “Ye shall find *rest* for your souls” (*6:16*); and by **Christ himself**, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*...and ye shall find *rest* unto your souls” (*Matt 11:28,29*). The *Sabbath* “rest” of the Old Testament prefigured the *salvation* “rest” that we have by faith in Jesus, and the *eternal* “rest” that we have promised to us in glory! Jesus is the fulfilling *reality* of that Sabbath rest of the Old Covenant; and once the reality comes, the type /shadow is discontinued.

**6. SDA** asks, “If the Ten Commandments are *abolished*, does that mean we can steal?” We ask them, “When you travel from Canada to the USA, does that mean you can steal?” Of course not! Any of the same laws can be contained within two completely different “codes of law”—“the law of Moses” which the children of Israel were under *vs.* “the law of Christ” which Christians are under. We listed above all six references in the **NT** against stealing. Paul specifically affirms three times in the same chapter (**2 Cor 3:7,11,13**) that the *old covenant form* of the Ten Commandments was “*abolished*.” You cannot get around the fact that Paul has the Ten Commandments in view, for he mentions the “**tables of stone**” and that which was “**engraven in stones**” (*vv 3,7*). Paul says that the Ten Commandments “killed” and were a ministry of “death” and “condemnation” (*vv 6,7,9*). The Greek verb he uses is *katargeo* (*vv 7,11,13*), meaning “to render inoperative, cause to cease, to abolish, to pass away, become of no effect, make void.” Paul is contrasting the New Covenant which is in place with the Old Covenant which has become inoperative; he is contrasting the New Covenant which brings life and enduring glory with the Old Covenant that brought death and condemnation. Paul says

three times here that something was “**done away**” with. The only “something” that can be found in this context is that which was “**engraven in stone**”—**the Ten Commandments!**

**7.** If we must follow the example of Jesus in all things like keeping the Sabbath, then why do **SDA** not follow the example of Jesus in circumcision, animal sacrifices and keeping passover? Jesus was born “under the law” (*Gal 4:4*), and kept every item of that Jewish law. He was required to do a number of things *as a Jew* for which we have *no* obligation. Believers are “not under the law” (*Rom 6:14,15*). This shows the utter fallacy of the **SDA** argument that we must keep the seventh day *just because Jesus did*. If we observe one institution of the old law *just because Jesus did*, then we should also keep *all* that he did, living just as the Jews did under the law of Moses. That’s what he did. He instructed his disciples to offer gifts upon the altar (*Matt 5:23,24*), and to do all that the scribes taught (*Matt 23:2,3*). He kept the passover just as the law said right up until the day before his death (*Luke 22:7-15*). But who thinks of doing all these things now **just because Jesus did!** No one! He was circumcised. Do **SDA** circumcise? No! Then why pick out *the seventh day* from all the other holy days and rites and hold on to that while rejecting all the rest which he also observed *as a Jew* “under the law”? That makes no sense at all! Yet this is one of the **SDA’s strongest arguments** for keeping the Sabbath!

**8.** If Paul’s action of preaching to non-believers on the Sabbath various times in the book of Acts makes him a “Sabbath keeper,” is an **SDA** pastor a “Sunday keeper” if we invite him for a certain amount of Sundays in a row to teach us God’s word? **SDA** makes a big thing over Paul preaching “*on the Sabbath*” (*Acts 13:14; 17:1,2; 18:4*). This is one of their *biggest guns* they fire at us—“**On what day did Paul worship?**”—They answer, “*he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath*” (*Acts 18:4*). To them, this case is strong enough to silence the whole world! an irrefutable argument! But is it really? *No!* It’s merely *shallow* reasoning, just a *surface* analysis. The question to be answered is **not** “*On what day...*?” but rather, “**Why** did Paul do what he did *on that day?*” Find the answer to that, which Scripture gives us, and so much for one their biggest guns!

Paul was a Jew with a great desire to win his brethren to Christ (*Rom 9:1-3*). He was very cautious about not making them prejudiced against him. As they were zealous in all the Jewish law, Paul knew that he must also keep this law if he was to have access to them. “Unto the Jews *I became as a Jew*, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law...and this I do for the gospel’s sake” (*1 Cor 9:20,23*). See what he did in the case of Timothy: “Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek” (*Acts 16:3*). Paul wanted Timothy to help him among the Jews, but he knew that the Jews wouldn’t listen to him if Timothy wasn’t circumcised. So he circumcised him to gain the Jews, though he clearly affirmed that “*Circumcision is nothing!*” (*1 Cor 7:19*). For the same reason he kept Pentecost

(*Acts 18:21; 20:16*), shaved his head (*Acts 18:18*), made offerings (*Acts 21:20-26*), and lived even as the Jews did, though he knew and taught that all these things were “**done away.**”

Suppose it could be shown that Paul always kept the Sabbath, would that prove that he regarded it as *necessary* for all Christians? Not at all. To them he wrote very plainly that they were not to keep the law concerning meats, drinks, feast days, new moons and Sabbath days (*Col 2:14-17; Rom 14:1-5; Gal 4:10*). He taught concerning all these just as he did about circumcision (*Gal 5:2*); it *wasn’t necessary*, yet he circumcised Timothy.

Now we’re beginning to see Paul’s motivation for entering a Jewish synagogue **on the Sabbath day**. It was not to “keep the Sabbath,” it was to *preach Christ* unto the Jews—“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures...that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ” (*Acts 17:2,3*). This was his opportunity; they were all gathered together. When? on the first day of the week? *No*. the third? the fifth? *No*. The Seventh day! **The Sabbath day!** But he was there, not because he was “keeping the Sabbath,” but to preach the gospel.

*Jews* and *Jewish* worship, and usually a *Jewish* synagogue, is what is consistently seen throughout Acts where Paul is preaching “*on the Sabbath*” (*Acts 13:14,15,42-46; 16:13; 17:1,2; 18:1-4*). He was not going amongst a group of believers who were enjoying the Lord’s Supper together and mutually edifying one another, as **SDA** want us to believe. It was his custom to enter synagogues first, that his people might be saved; but these occasions had nothing to do with a **Christian gathering**, as in Acts 20:7, “**And upon the first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.” Notice Paul was there “*seven days*” (*vv 6*), yet *no notice* whatever is taken of the Sabbath day! *None!* The Holy Spirit emphasizes “**the first day of the week.**” And though Paul was there a whole week and over the Jewish Sabbath, yet the Lord’s Supper is not administered until what day?—**Sunday!**

**SDA** loudly tout the number 84. They say these texts in Acts show that Paul “kept 84 Sabbaths.” That’s not so. They calculate 78 Sabbaths in Corinth, the whole “year and six months” that he was there (*18:11*); but they fail to realize that instead of “reasoning in the synagogue” all this time, he withdrew from the Jews, saying, “henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles, and he departed” (*vv 6,7*). He went into the house of Justus near the synagogue. So there is no evidence that he preached in the synagogue more than a few Sabbaths. Not one single case can be found where Paul kept the Sabbath in **a Christian assembly**, nor is the Sabbath ever mentioned in any way in connection **with Christian meetings**, while it is said that the disciples met **on the first day of the week!**

Why is there no example **in all the NT** of exclusively Christians coming together “on the Sabbath day” as a church or prayer meeting **after** the resurrection of Christ?□

—Dan Shanks

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